Reginald Pole
Prince & Prophet

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Contents

Tables

Illustrations

1

A book and a life

Reginald Pole was one of those authors whose first book makes his reputation. As often in such cases, he does not deserve it, either for good or for bad. For one thing, the book was not his. A large number of people involved themselves in the composition and even Erasmus in Basel knew about it.[1] For another, the work does not qualify as a book, nor did Pole give it the title by which it has come to be known, *Reginaldi Poli ad Henricum octavum Britanniae regem, pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione*, abbreviated as *De unitate*.[2] The version sent to Henry VIII has no title and begins like a letter, except that it lacks a salutation.[3] The informal manner of address bears out the interpretation of *De unitate* as a letter, as does Pole's insistence that the work was for the king's eyes only. However characterized and by whomever written between September 1535 and March 1536 when its principal author was just turning thirty-six, it immediately generated great demand and great anxieties, on the part of both author and readers.

The letter/book created both Pole and its original target Henry, making images of each that have proven coeval with subsequent historiography. Marie Hallé was typical in her dogmatic assertion that Pole told the truth and nothing but the truth in *De unitate* to such a degree that he could be implicitly believed in anything he said.[4] While few working historians would endorse this hermeneutic, now or ever, the equally sweeping contention that the work defended papal primacy against all comers has served as a fulcrum from which to survey not only Pole's career, but also large tracts of the history of both the English and continental reformations. At the risk of immediately descending to fatuity, the story is not so simple. Henry the ogre is in as large measure Pole's fiction as is Pole the speak-

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1 *OEE*, 11, no. 3076.

2 For the text of *De unitate*, see *CPM*, catalogue no. 1. I cite the Blado printed edition of 1539 which runs very close to the best MS in so far as one can tell, given its sad state.

3 PRO, SP 1/104, pp. 1–280.

4 Hallé, p. 72.

er of truth. *De unitate* contains at least as many ideas at odds with the sort of papal monarchy Pole has been taken to defend as it does crudely hieratic statements. Pole did not reveal the literal truth, or at least not all of it, when he quickly told Henry that the issue was his opinion 'about the power of the Roman pontiff and this your new and now for the first time usurped honour by which you have arrogated the title and right of supreme head of the church of England'. Pole *did*, however, reveal the literal truth when even before this passage he exactly described his attitude not only then, but throughout his life. As he told Henry, many things were happening 'that render my soul *suspensum, dubium* and poor (*inopem*) of all counsel' (fo. Ir). The rest of Pole's career makes sense when considered as the working out of the consequences of such a 'suspension' in the face of a congeries of pieties and authorities, not just Henry. Pole's first text, especially when read as a text and not an oracle's utterance, becomes a conflicted story.[5]

One point stands out. It is a story of resistance. Characterizing *De unitate* in this way is not new, but the nature of its resistances has been little explored, and it has been overlooked that they were not aimed exclusively at Henry. The pope and the church came in for almost as much attention. Pole exhibited a number of resistances on both scores, but undoubtedly the most important was the adoption of a set of *personae*, in almost the original sense of masks, a range of identities that made it almost impossible to strike at 'Pole himself'. Throughout he experimented with literary forms through which to resist cultural and political hegemony. The work's superficial design of bringing the errant Henry back into the church by the shortest, epic path frequently falls victim to romance interludes. This literary sophistication together with Pole's ambivalent attitude and its consequences – above all the masks he wore – have made it nearly impossible to decide just what he was.

Although *De unitate* represented a major change in Pole's itinerary, he did not turn his back on his education for royal service. He claimed that the work repaid Henry for 'all the years I have spent in the labor of my studies [which] you supported'. Since these studies were overtly political as we shall see and Pole treated this motive as distinct from 'the confession of Christ's name', he meant that *De unitate* was to be read in part as a political tract.[6] Pole first identified his compe-

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[5] Of earlier interpretations of *De unitate*, only a few go beyond reportage. About the best previous reading is Breifne V. Walker, 'Cardinal Reginald Pole, papal primacy and church unity 1529–1536', University College, Dublin, MA thesis, 1972.

[6] Adriano Prosperi, 'Evangelismo di Seripando', in Antonio Cestaro, ed., *Geronimo Seripando e la chiesa del suo tempo nel V centenario della nascita* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1997), pp. 33–49, p. 48 brings out the coalescence of political and religious in Seripando.

tence as 'sicknesses of the soul', and physician to Henry's soul became one of the roles Pole most frequently adopted.[7] He reached this specialty only after he had already drawn the standard analogy between corporal and mystical bodies (fo. IIr–v), and when he 'entered the argument', he compared the church and the *civitas* (fo. IIIIr) in a common political analysis. Thus the soul was political, as were the acts which it caused, especially Henry's, and so were family relationships. On fo. IIv Pole passed directly from calling himself Henry's mother to assuring the king that he would never have wished to be subject to any other *imperium*. Pole often characterized Henry's crimes against the church in political terms, especially *seditio* (fos. XXVIIIr; LXXIIIv–LXXIIIIr).

Pole immediately also claimed skill in letters and their political use (fos. IIIv, VIIr), and just as immediately made plain the intensity of his text's political resistance. He told Henry that he knew the truth about the respective powers of pope and king or about the headship did not interest the king. Pole attacked on these two fronts, arguing from scripture and ancient history, the grounds Henry and his propagandists had chosen, rather than human reason or the power of example (although both put in numerous appearances; fos. Vv–VIr). Unable to agree with Henry's claim, Pole could see no option but to write and make himself guilty of treason and, worse, ingratitude. This would be the height of imprudence. As Sallust said, it was 'extreme madness' to act in such a way as to arouse hatred. A quotation – the first in the book – from a classical author well-known for his republican sympathies was probably not accidental. Whether drawn from Sallust or from many other sources, a discussion of the nature of true prudence became one of the work's major arguments (fo. Ir–v), closely paralleled by discussion of true foolishness (*stultitia*). Much of the strategy of *De unitate* turned on such resistance by definition. This in turn depended on resistance by unmasking dissimulation, the highest form of political prudence.[8]

Pole prescribed a simple remedy for the twin causes of Henry's illness (fo. XCVIIr), the love of a prostitute and 'diversity of opinions' about religion, but its meaning is not so straightforward. The king had to repent and do penance in order to re-enter the church, his mother. Quite apart from the wildly spiralling family romances Pole constructed around Henry's 'mother' Pole defined the church differently than his hagiographers have argued. He did indeed defend

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[7] This could have been a legacy from Galen. Cf. F. W. Conrad, 'A preservative against tyranny: the political theology of Sir Thomas Elyot', Johns Hopkins University Ph.D. thesis, 1988, p. 48.

[8] P. S. Donaldson, 'Machiavelli and antichrist: prophetic typology in Reginald Pole's *De unitate* and *Apologia ad Carolum quintum*', in *Machiavelli and mystery of state* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1–35.

papal power, but as the mere title of the printed version of his work must have reminded his learned readers, not necessarily at the expense of the rest of the hierarchy, particularly the bishops. The title probably raised strong overtones of Cyprian's most famous treatise, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*. Although sometimes read as an unequivocally papalist statement, Cyprian actually defended a collective leadership of the church.[9] Pole's tortuous and partial reading of Cyprian's letter to Cornelius could not hide the fact that it did not support his interpretation of it as a defence of Roman primacy (fo. LXIIr–v).[10] His difficulties with Cyprian may well have arisen because Pole, too, at several points defended episcopal authority. In his attack on Henry's argument from classical Christian precedent, Pole claimed that Constantine had intervened in the Council of Nicaea only to shame the bishops into behaving themselves. This cleared the way for the council to gain the same authority as the apostles (fo. XIXr). More importantly, when explaining Peter's primacy Pole identified the church which never differed from Peter as the succession of the bishops 'who rule it' (fo. XXXIIIv). Later Pole went so far as to define the church, along with Ockham, as 'the multitude of believers' (fo. LXVIv).

The bishops, 'the successors of the apostles', might not individually always meet the apostolic standard, but this did not reduce the dignity of their office, any more than unworthy occupants did the papal or royal dignities. Peter was important, but not singular even after he had undergone a metamorphosis produced by divine revelation of his new status. He was not even the only rock, a label Pole applied to all Christians (fo. XLVIIIv). Peter did stand out in 'dignity and degree of excellence, nor did all get the same place of nobility in this building [of the church]' (fo. XLVIIIv), but earlier Pole defended divine right episcopacy (fo. XXr). Even in the heat of a protracted insistence on Peter's power, Pole both allowed that the other apostles might have had the same power, if not dignity, and also pointed to the example of Moses and the seventy elders to illustrate that neither he nor the pope had their powers diminished by sharing them.

A short and cryptic statement may tell most about Pole's attitude to papal

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[9] G. S. M. Walker, *The churchmanship of St Cyprian* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1969), p. 26. The only examples Walker cites of the work's use by Catholics are very late (p. 61).

[10] Pole quoted Cyprian's letter to Pope Cornelius, but partially and misleadingly (fos. LXIIv–LXIIIr). He included the phrase 'Petri cathedram, atque ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est', but stopped short of the rest of the passage 'eos esse Romanos quorum fides apostolo praedicante laudata est'. Wilhelm Hartel, ed., *S. Thasci Caecili Cypriani Opera Omnia* (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1872), pp. 673–4.

primacy. Should the pope not feed Christ's sheep, as Pole earlier admitted had happened, 'remedies are not lacking, by which the church can easily cure this evil' (fos. XXXIIIv–IVr and CIr). Although Pole hurried on to talk of unity, he did so by turning to the Council of Florence in order to refute Henry's claim that the Greeks did not recognize papal headship. His mere reference to the council is distinctive, since very little was known about it even after it occasionally inspired fierce debate at Trent.[11] Pole's mind easily ran from remedies to councils. He offered a more pointed criticism of the papacy when using the myth of Hercules and Cacus against Henry's apologist Richard Sampson. Did Sampson think he could get away with stealing from the pope, as Cacus tried to do while Hercules slept? No, 'the lord of sheep does not sleep, but he sees you, and sees you from the heaven' (fo. LVIIIv). If the pope missed what Sampson was up to, God would not.

Pole was anything but a high papalist in other important ways, for example, making good use of the distinction between man and office, which eventually became that between man and Christ (fo. Cv). Did Henry and his propagandists not know that they owed honour not to the occupant, but to Christ (fo. XXXVIIIr)? The pope's role as successor of Peter meant only that he must 'bear the burden of the church' (fo. XLIXv). Feeding Christ's sheep, another of the proof-texts behind the primacy, did mean that a single man had to be the head of the 'multitude' in the church which would otherwise dissolve (fo. LIv), and that man had been Peter, according to 'the most learned and most holy' Chrysostom (fo. LVv). Nevertheless, Christ established Peter in order to suppress competition for the headship (fo. LIIIr–v). The principal requirement of the head of the church was lack of ambition (and contrariwise, this was one of Henry's principal faults; fo. XIXr–v). Christ had repressed 'contention over the

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[11] Pole very likely learned of the manuscript of the Greek acts of Florence which Gregorio Cortese found in the Biblioteca San Marco in Venice either directly from Cortese or through Giovanni Battista Egnazio who was co-operating with him. *Gregorii Cortesii monachi casinatis S. R. E. cardinalis omnia quae huc usque colligi potuerunt, sive ab eo scripta, sive ad illum spectantia* (Padua: Giuseppe Comino, 1774; 2 vols.), 1, p. 114. For the scarce knowledge of Florence otherwise, see, e.g., ASP, Carteggio Farnese Estero, Venezia, 509, 83/1, nuncio to Venice-Alessandro Farnese, 23 November 1542, or Marcello Cervini's hush-hush inquiry to the librarian of the Biblioteca apostolica in 1546 in connection with the discussion of the canon of scripture. *CT*, 1, p. 399. Vittorio Peri, *Ricerche sull'editio princeps degli atti greci del Concilio di Firenze* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1975), p. 6 says there was no further search for the acts until the 1560s. Peri notes that Bernardino Scotti owned a MS, so it may also have been through him that Pole knew the council's proceedings. Pole could also have known the Latin acts which had been printed at least once in 1526 by Antonio Blado.

principate [the papal office]' as 'most foreign to those who should rule the church of God, where humility, not ambition . . . should have the first place'. Christ, 'since he was the lord of all, excelled everyone in humility, and ministered to all' (fo. LIIIv). These statements posed a resistance of the first order to the direction in which papal government had evolved since at least the thirteenth century. Even stronger was Pole's claim that superiors in the church did not rule 'as dominators . . . but as servants', thereby pointing to Gregory the Great's famous description of himself as 'the servant of the servants of God' quoted on fo. LXIIr. Pole continued that 'the house of God is ruled by charity' quickly qualified as 'inflamed by the spirit of God', which meant that no inferior should ever hesitate to correct an erring superior (fo. LXXr).

In the final book of *De unitate* Pole spelled out a dangerous implication he had raised earlier. He contrasted the early days 'in which the sons of the church abounded in the gifts of the holy spirit' with 'these same most corrupt times in which many judge that knowledge which is had through divine light to be almost extinct in men' (fo. CXXVv). The same held true for secular history, the countless examples of which could only be understood in the light of spiritual illumination. Since the test of successful illumination was consistency, both the church and secular power had to return to their original state. This set a tough standard, offering equally strong resistance on both ecclesiastical and secular fronts. Pole's rooting of the present church in its primitive ancestor dictated very limited claims about the papacy. Not only did he stress its lowly social status, but he also thought that not even the apostles collectively, much less Peter alone, had been its entire leadership. This included 'the others who [had] first fruits of the power of God's spirit', a less than hierocratic statement (fo. XVr). Pole again quoted Chrysostom, a father of great importance to him and his circles, to the effect that 'bondman (?) of Jesus Christ was to be preferred as a title of honour not only to the name of king, but even to the very apostles, even to the very angels and archangels' (fo. XVv).[12] Pole played the Augustinian card about the difference between Christ's 'doctrine' and the 'domination' of rulership to prove that Christ, and therefore the church, did not claim coercive authority (fo. XVIv). Christ had come in part to sort out the confusion between the two powers (fo. XIVv). The clerical office, however, remained superior to the king's, since priests had responsibility for souls (fo. XIIIIr), dealt with divine things (fo. XXr), and knew a higher form of wisdom than

[12] Pole's word was *vinctus*, which Joseph G. Dwyer rendered as prisoner. *Pole's defense of the unity of the church* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1965), p. 38.

human prudence (fo. XXIr). Their superiority and the entirety of their office consisted in prayer for those things above human powers (fos. XXIIIv; XXVr). This duty, like everything else touching the clergy, all priests had in common (fos XXIIIIrff.). Likening praying priests to 'legates sent by everyone' to God was scarcely a hierocratic move, either (fo. XXVr at length). Later Pole contradicted himself by adding that priests 'stood above' kings who merely commanded and could 'prescribe what ought to be done in the royal office' (fo. XXVIr). Eventually he came to describe the church in terms of a hierarchy composed of lower orders, priests, bishops, archbishops, and 'he who bears the *persona* of God' (but no cardinals; fo. XXXVIIIr). In short, the leadership of the church was oligarchical, rather than monarchical, just as it was for his client Thomas Starkey and friend and possible teacher in Padua, Marco Mantova.[13] Pole breathed hardly any word of the papacy as a judicial institution, and none at all of papal monarchy. The sole reference which suggests a jurisprudential reading of the papacy occurred when Pole wrote of the controversy between Peter and Paul over the limits of Peter's *ditio*, a very ambiguous word frequently employed in a sense close to territorial jurisdiction. That Pole probably did not intend this meaning emerges from the fact that he used it of Christ, who had no earthly authority (fo. LXIXr).[14]

It would have been strange if Pole had thought He had, since ultimately he rested his case for the clergy on prophetic authority (fo. XLIIv). He adopted a number of prophetic *personae* of great importance for his identity, from David (fo. Xr; cf. fo. CXIXv) to Moses, to Isaiah, the most frequently cited.[15] Pole often supported his points with one prophet or another speaking 'in the *persona* of God' (e.g., fo. XXXVIr) and several times made his own prophecies. One of the most threatening came at the end of book I when Pole foretold Henry's destruction. The martial opening of book II heightened the threat (fo. XXXr–v). Immediately after his exhortation to Charles V to invade England,

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[13] Thomas F. Mayer, 'Thomas Starkey, an unknown conciliarist at the court of Henry VIII', *Journal of the history of ideas*, 49 (1988), pp. 207–27 and 'Marco Mantova, a bronze age conciliarist', *Annuarium historiae conciliorum*, 14 (1984), pp. 385–408.

[14] Thomas F. Mayer, 'Tournai and tyranny: imperial kingship and critical humanism', *HJ*, 34 (1991), pp. 257–77 together with the critique by C. S. L. Davies, 'Tournai and the English crown, 1513–1519', *HJ*, 41 (1998), pp. 1–26.

[15] Donaldson, pp. 21–30 first drew attention to how the prophets functioned in Pole's argument, and how he identified with them. There are thirty citations to Isaiah in the index to Noëlle-Marie Egretier, ed. and trans., Reginald Pole, *Défense de l'unité de l'église* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1967) as against seven for Ezekiel.

Pole effaced the *persona* of prophet and claimed that the Old Testament prophets spoke through him (fo. CXIIIIv).[16] He called himself Elijah, the only man left after the deaths of John Fisher and Thomas More (fo. XXVIIIv; cf. fo. LXXIIIIv). Moses frequently appeared, at least once as Pole's alter ego in a discussion of the significance of Moses's prophetic powers to government (fo. XXI–IIIV; cf. e.g., fos. XXIIIIr, XLIIr, Lr–v). As this instance indicates, Moses's status as a type of the secular ruler gave rise to some peculiar overtones on what Pole thought of his own position. Pole applied to himself Isaiah's words 'Raise your voice like a trumpet' (Isa. 58:1, quoted from memory). Ezekiel, from a walk-on (fo. CVIr), became a starring *persona* when his voice spoke through Pole to tell Henry that God can deceive prophets (fo. CXIVv).[17] Given how importantly dissimulation and its exposure figured in Pole's argument, Ezekiel's words resonated loudly. The last quotation in the work comes from Ezekiel telling Henry not to let 'your iniquity be your ruin' (fo. CXXXVIr; Ez. 18:30, quoted from memory).

When Pole came to his final exhortation to Henry, he turned to Isaiah. He asked the king whether he heard Isaiah's voice, after raising the likelihood that Francis I would attack Henry (fo. CIXr). He cited Isaiah's judgment of Sardanapalus as a prophecy of Henry's tomb (fo. CXVIIIr; Isa. 14:18–20 according to Dwyer). More important, he introduced Isaiah's definition of a true teacher at the end of a discussion of faith and reason to endorse the claims of faith (fo. CXXIIv; Isa. 30:19–21). Nearing the climax, Pole advised Henry to consult Isaiah about what he should do to save himself (fo. CXXXr; Isa. 58:1), a passage which reflects the typological nature of Pole's argument, since everyone in it was assigned an Old Testament role.

The church's dependence on prophecy and revelation ran right to the very top. Peter owed his position to revelation and he alone knew it because only he had direct, personal, testimony from God (fo. XLVr; cf. fo. XLIXr). This claim both here and earlier (fos. XLIIv–IIIv) was closely linked to a defence of ecclesiastical custom. Pole quickly explained that such divine revelation had nothing to do with flesh and blood (fo. XLVIr–v). Pole maintained that the church only

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[16] In 'Nursery of resistance: Reginald Pole and his friends', in Paul A. Fideler and T. F. Mayer, eds., *Political thought and the Tudor commonwealth: deep structure, discourse and disguise* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 50–74, I said that this passage had been cut from the presentation copy, misinterpreting Thomas F. Dunn, 'The development of the text of Pole's *De unitate ecclesiae*', *Papers of the bibliographical society of America*, 70 (1976), pp. 455–68, p. 463.

[17] The reference is Ezekiel 14:4,5 according to Dwyer, p. 280. This seems doubtful, but I have found no closer quotation.

knew God's will thanks to 'the light of the Holy Spirit' (fo. CIIv). Nor did his church require much institutional structure; it was not, after all, a physical building, even though composed of a multitude of men (fo. XLIXv).

The church did, however, need nobility, and Pole made a contest over Peter's true nobility the central point (fo. XLVIIIv). Just as Pole thereby resisted both secular and ecclesiastical 'absolutism', so insisting on the status of the English nobility and of himself as one noble in particular furthered the same end. At first, it might have seemed that Pole was merely establishing another claim to be heard when he reminded Henry of how the king had singled him out, 'one out of all the English nobility' (fo. IIIv; cf. fo. CXXr). When he turned to how Henry had thrown the succession into doubt, Pole greatly magnified his own standing in a transparently threatening way (fo. LXXXv) by justifying on grounds of scripture the innocence of his uncle, the earl of Warwick whom Henry VII had quietly executed (fo. LXXXIr). Pole also warned Henry that he would never get away with repudiating Mary. Amongst 'such a number of most noble families' any disruption of the succession would certainly lead to sedition. That is, unless Henry did away with all the nobility (fo. LXXXIv). Thus when Pole shortly after this reminded Henry of his educational benefits to him by suggesting an analogy for what Henry had done to the church, he did not randomly choose a republic (*civitas*) undergoing a change from rule by the privileged classes (*populus*) to rule by one. 'Consult the histories of all republics, and you will find that those republics which were constituted by the rule of the people (*populus*) suffered no greater injury than when they were reduced under the power of one' (fo. IIIIv). Only after this resoundingly aristocratic statement did Pole allow that rule by one was the 'best state' of a republic.

Pole then hurried on to note the dangers in any alteration to the *status* of a country (fo. IIIIr), and to insist that no single head could behave to the church as Henry had, as an 'emperor' who had conquered territory and could dispose of it as he wished. Pole knew Henry's more extreme claims. He reproduced the basic one that 'in a republic the cases of all citizens are referred to the king, as to the supreme head of the body politic' (fo. XVIr). He obliquely referred to another when he applied language to Henry which echoed the famous legal maxim 'the king is an emperor in his own kingdom' (fo. LXr). Henry had made similar noises, probably ventriloquizing his French predecessors, since early in his reign.[18] Later Pole compared Henry to the Great Turk, stressing the role of consent in England. The realm now had no more than 'a memory of its pristine liberty',

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[18] Mayer, 'Tournai and tyranny', *passim*.

despite its best men's efforts (fo. CIv). Pole asserted that the king's office consisted in only two things: domestic justice and defence against attack.

Kings ruled by human prudence, which Pole set parallel in the earthly kingdom to 'the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ that rules the church' (fo. XLIIr), and to the prophet's word in the church (fo. XLIIv). 'Human prudence alone' *could* maintain civil concord, even if the greater hope the priests could offer was also needed (fo. XXIr–v). Human prudence, like the king, belonged to the order of nature, and was therefore subordinate to that of supernature, the realm of Christ and his representatives (e.g., fos. XIv–XIIr). Put another way, the end of the *civitas* was a matter of the flesh, that of the church of the soul and the spirit, and finally Christ and God. The blessings which Moses promised the *civitas* that observed the laws of nature would be dwarfed by those coming to the community that kept God's laws (fo. XLIIr). But it must be emphasized that Pole stressed the value of human prudence throughout the work.

The problem of its status, like that of the separation of roles between king and clergy, and like the larger line of demarcation between church and civil society, could have been made clearer in what Pole finally admitted was a *mysterium*, likening himself attempting to explicate it to Moses hidden in a cloud (fo. XXIVv). Although Pole harshly criticized English apologists for confusing political society with the church and insisted 'as much as the sky is distant from the earth, so much [space] is there between civil and ecclesiastical power' (fo. XVIr–v), he never managed to keep the two societies distinct, and compounded the problem by recasting both on the parallel lines of a new kind of spiritual politics. In a passage of ekphrasis, he simultaneously drew parallels and distinctions between ecclesiastical and secular government. In order to explain the nature of rule by one, Pole imagined 'a shadow or as if a picture' like that a good artist could make of a 'real body'. Although he cautioned that continuing the metaphor would confuse the issue of their differences, he did just this. A *civitas* was 'a multitude of men joined by right [*iure*] and laws' under the rule of one. The same definition applied to the church, imagined 'in the mind's eye'. The only difference lay in the source of the two communities' laws, one human, the other divine. In terms of structure, they were identical.

In theory, Pole pursued the line opened up in the quest for origins when he set the church above civil society because of its unique role in salvation, but even there he slipped. At one point, for example, he paraphrased Cicero as saying kings made citizens 'blessed' (fo. XXIIr; repeated on fo. XXIVv). He granted that distinguishing clergy and king was difficult, since the clergy were also part of the *populus* and should therefore apparently be subject like the rest of it to the king (fo. XXIIv). The usual solution was to examine origins, but this would not work in the case of the first priest Melchisedech, since he had neither father nor

mother (fo. XXIIIr). In terms of dignity or nobility the problem was easily solved. Since everything came from God, priests were required to deal with 'the things of the people' before God, which made them superior to kings. Without 'heavenly favor' all things would be frustrated (fo. XXIIIv).[19] As Pole concluded, 'if it is more superior to deal with God than with men', then the priests had to have the upper hand. Their 'end' of salvation was more important than the king's 'end', as even Plato knew (fo. XXIVv).

This is perhaps the clearest traditional hieratic statement in the work, going back at least to Pope Gelasius in the fourth century, and consequently one of the points to which Henry might have objected most strongly. It turned out that Pole caused himself most trouble in the long run by implying that 'the people' could reverse the decision by which they had constituted a single head for themselves (fos. XIIr, XXIIr).[20] Arguing from origins Pole concluded that 'therefore on account of the people, the king, not the people on account of the king' (fo. XXIIr). Many nations managed entirely without kings, including the Jews. When they finally got theirs, God granted Saul 'not as a benefit, but rather for punishment' (fos. XXIIIv, XXXVv). Pole also adduced the Romans getting rid of their kings, allegedly as an example of the consequences of removing an institution because of a bad man wielding its power, but he failed to draw any negative conclusions (fo. XXXVIIv). By talking about this transference of power in terms of the *lex regia*, Pole entered into the ongoing debate over the origins not only of royal but also of imperial power (fo. LXr). The *lex regia* by which the Romans had supposedly transferred all their power to the emperor had been one of the proof-texts medieval lawyers and political writers had used to resist various earlier moves in the direction of absolutism.[21] Pole's description of the modelling of secular society on the hierarchy of the universe further carefully made room for two layers of magistrates between the 'lowest common people' and 'the command [*imperium*] of one supreme [head]' (fo. XXXIIr), an analogy immediately applied to the church, once more violating the absolute distinction between church and civil society that Pole had posited. Worse, German Lutherans had begun to use the same argument to justify resistance by the lesser magistrates to Charles's religious policy, as Pole almost certainly knew.[22]

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[19] Pole also deployed the classical terminology of *numen* throughout this passage.

[20] Pole did not write about a 'pact' between king and people, as Dwyer, p. 56 mistranslated *quo pacto* rather than 'how'.

[21] H. Morel, 'La place de la *lex regia* dans l'histoire des idées politiques', in *Etudes offertes à J. Macqueron* (Aix-en-Provence: Faculté de Droit et des Sciences Economiques, 1970), pp. 545–56.

[22] Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, 2, *The reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978; 2 vols.), pp. 195–208.

At the very least, a king had to listen to his counsellors and friends, among whom Pole ranked himself high (fo. VIIr). Fisher and More should have been Henry's best friends. They certainly were Pole's, a point repeated often (e.g., fo. XXXr). Denuded of all his friends, Henry was at the mercy of flatterers and self-servers among his advisers, worse than those of any earlier king, Sampson above all (fos. Vr–v; XIXv; CXVIIIv–CXIXr). Pole engaged in one of the favourite forms of noble behaviour in his confrontation with Sampson, casting most of the first two books of *De unitate* as a duel with Henry's champion. Sampson was like Goliath, pushing ahead of him an enormous spear and sword, the proem to his book. Pole returned to play on Sampson and Goliath, refusing to call Sampson by his biblical namesake's name (fo. Xv). Then he was a gladiator, prematurely basking in the glory showered on him by the crowd (fos. VIIIv–IXr). Sampson mistakenly not only thought he had won, but also played with a serious matter, or worse, deliberately deluded the English people (fo. Xr).

Knowing when to play and when to be serious comes close to the meaning of prudence. That Pole could draw the distinction might have been another reason why he deserved to replace Sampson among Henry's counsellors. His pristine record of opposition to Henry's fatal politics assuredly qualified him. Here Pole offered resistance through autobiography, especially when rewriting the story of his role in Henry's consultation of the university of Paris about his divorce (see below). Pole's account may have saved his face, but it represented another kind of truth than what happened in the first place. Pole also rewrote other kinds of history. One of the odder bits concerned the tale of the unwavering allegiance shown by the kings of France to the pope. Philip the Fair, to name only one of Francis's predecessors, had been erased (fo. CVIIIv).

Some of Pole's attack on Sampson is clearly playful, even if he accused Sampson of trying to force him to play (fo. Xr), and some of it is perhaps humorous. Like the high noble he was, Pole could not joke at length about the serious matter of duels. One of the central conceits of the work makes it a combat with Henry, not merely Sampson (announced already on fo. VIIr). Pole even offered a challenge to 'single combat' (*singulare certamen*) to any who would defend Henry. Honour, the value duels defended, was also one of Pole's central values, and he insisted that he was not attacking Henry's.[23] In fact, it was his only con-

[23] As Mervyn James said, Pole 'systematized' the language of crusade with its emphasis on honour as a means of resisting Henry. See 'English politics and the concept of honour 1485–1642', *Past and present*, supplement 3 (1978), p. 37 reprinted in *Society, politics and culture: studies in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 308–415. See also W. A. Sessions, 'Surrey's Wyatt: autumn 1542 and the new poet', in Peter C. Herman, ed., *Rethinking the Henrician era: essays on early Tudor texts and contexts* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 168–92.

cern, and he promised the king that if he came back to the church, Christ would give him more than any other king (fo. VIIv). Nonetheless, attack he would, at least on the metaphoric level (fo. VIIIr). Like David tending his sheep, Pole had no experience of arms (although he had carried them as a student in Venice, a fact he ignored), but this would not prevent the outcome of his duel from being like David's with Goliath, since he had 'God's army' on his side (fo. Xv).[24] Pole hastened to add that God did not conquer with swords and spears, but this did not prevent him from carrying through the metaphor of a duel.

In thus framing his work, the play was the thing to Pole. He deployed a multitude of *personae* together with a great range of other literary devices, especially dramatic metaphors. One of Pole's best strategies was rhetorical criticism both of Sampson's book and of Henry's actions which became 'tragedies' in Pole's representation. A marginal note pithily summed up this line of attack: 'Sampson plays Goliath' (fo. Xv). Near the beginning of book II, Pole replied at length to Sampson's rhetorical device of having Peter criticize his unworthy successors as pope. Dramatic metaphors litter this passage, above all *personae* (fos. XXXIIrff.). Despite a long discussion of the dangers of rhetoric, Pole objected most strongly to Sampson not that he had created characters but that he violated verisimilitude in them. Sampson was a *bad* rhetorician who offended both against the 'laws of rhetors' and 'ordinary, vulgar prudence' (fo. XXXIIIr). When explicating the equivalence of Peter and the rock on which Christ had founded his church, Pole offered a lesson in how to read metaphors (fos. XLVIIrff.). Indeed, his entire case for Peter's superior nobility rested on a *similitudo*, a metaphor, that of the mystical body of the church (fo. XLVIIIv; cf. fo. XIVv where Pole appealed to the growth of the mystical body as proof that Christ must have left a visible head behind). Similarly, like the good humanist Pole was, he termed his method an exercise in putting examples (fo. IIr).

At one of the book's climaxes, Pole drew an extended theatrical analogy between the reaction of the Athenian *populus* to Socrates's death and how Londoners had taken More's execution. The Athenians had performed 'as if reciting words in a theatre', imitating 'some tragedy'. The Londoners, with juster cause for indignation, had not confined their rage to 'your [Henry's] theatre', but spread it throughout the Christian world. While the Athenians might have been playing, the Londoners were 'more than serious'. How could Henry have missed the implied sequel in the fate of Socrates's prosecutors, murdered by their enraged fellow citizens (fo. XCIIIIv)?

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[24] Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 190 for his licence to bear arms in 1523.

Pole leaned very heavily on the deaths of Fisher and More.[25] They had brought him to write, and taught him as much as he had learned in years of study (fo. Iv). Pole identified himself with them through the device of assigning both them and him the *persona* of physician of Henry's soul (fo. IIr). Even an identification of More with Socrates was insufficient. More would ultimately become a Christ-figure combating Henry's Antichrist and sacrificing himself for the king (fos. XCr and XCIIv). By then, Pole had already identified himself with Christ, beginning on fo. IIIr where he said that God had made his voice Christ's and given it the power to raise the dead. Pole began by telling the king that 'your intelligence [*ingenio*], learning, prudence and finally experience' could never be compared to Fisher's and More's, a point that later grew into several eulogies of More's prudence and political acumen (e.g., fos. LXXXIXrff.).[26] Even if Henry had superior endowments, he still lacked the one thing needful, 'the spirit of Christ', which had allowed Fisher and More to understand scriptural metaphors (*figurae*) (fos. LXXIIv–LXXIIIr). Overtly political resistance had its place, but as in the case of the papacy, Pole found a charismatic defence more appealing. This did not mean that he neglected the bluntly physical. Among the other uses to which Pole put Fisher and More, he emphasized the brutality done to their bodies, and dwelt on the ignominious manner of their deaths and the fate of their (and the other martyrs') bodies (fos. IIr and LXXXIIIvff.). Pole could not resist several horrid puns on heads, including the rhetorical question 'can we doubt whose church's head [he means Satan's] cut off those heads' (fo. LXXXIIIIr)? Pole repeatedly said he was crying while writing, but it seems he must also have been laughing, however grimly.

More and Fisher had stood up to Henry by 'the present help of God and present virtue of Christ' (fo. Cr), and physical presence and bodies, especially Christ's, figured in Pole's case for Petrine supremacy. One of his justifications rested on Christ's dual nature as God and man, which meant that he had to leave a human successor. 'If Christ was equally God and man, and is head, then it necessarily follows that either Peter or someone else of the number of those who are mere men, should hold the place of head after Christ' (fo. LIr). Christ had established the 'form' of the church with a head to its multitude. Did it make sense to think that because he had left 'the presence of the body' the form would dissolve (fo. LIv)? He had established a successor while present in the flesh (fo.

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[25] He put less stress on the other martyrs, but they too appeared, e.g., on fo. CIIIv. For Pole's martyrological notion of papal primacy, see below chapter 5.

[26] Pole cut this passage on Contarini's objections. Dunn, pp. 462–3.

LVIv). Christ promised that even though 'I will certainly not be present in the body', the spirit will sustain the church (fo. LVIIv).

Very shortly after his deadly serious treatment of Fisher and More Pole veered well out of the epic, even cosmic, path he had set himself. In order to remind Henry of how far he had already fallen, Pole recalled the high expectations early in Henry's reign for 'a golden age'. 'What did your outstanding virtues not promise, which shone in you especially in the first years of your reign?' Further, Henry's father had added to his education 'the care of letters, as streams pouring into a well-planted garden, by which, like waters, your virtues were irrigated, so that they might grow better and spread themselves more like the branches of a tree'. Making his favourite move, Pole then quoted the prophet Ezekiel to compare Henry to a tree in the Garden of Eden! This simile held above all because Henry's tree united in itself the contenders for the throne and thus brought the faction fights of the fifteenth century to an end. (Can Pole have been unconscious of the overlap between his garden metaphor, the genealogical one of a family tree, and the horticulturally labelled Wars of the Roses?) Henry had begun as part of a deliberately created garden, but was fated to become twisted epic. Quoting Isaiah, Pole warned that God had promised to destroy his vineyard, a proleptic move out of the idyll of Henry's early years into the current tragedy (fo. LXXIXv).

Pole's ultimate move against Henry returned to Christ's passion. Here Pole claimed to advert to the hermeneutic he had proposed very early in the work, according to which the king as interpreter should pay attention 'not so much to the words, but rather penetrate into the sense', always assuming that any words could support the king's case (fo. VIr; cf. XLIIIIv). Many people knew what the 'sign' meant, but only a few, like Peter, could know a higher sense (fo. XLVIr–v). Finding it required divine inspiration, which produced the allegorical interpretation Pole preferred.[27] 'The whole of this mystery is contained in Christ's passion', Pole told Henry. Only one who had 'eyes so illuminated by faith' could understand that Christ was 'the son of God, author of our felicity, and teacher of the same' (cf. fo. LXXIIIr). Christ's bodily death set the pattern for all his 'members', who also had to suffer crucifixion of their bodies if they wished salvation. Such 'living books' revealed God's will as no written books could, even those dictated by the Spirit. 'These books that were written in the blood of the martyrs are to be preferred to all others. These were archetypical books, in which the sole finger of God appears' (cf. fo. CIIIv). Pole pushed his anti-intellectual stance by

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[27] As suggested by Egretier, p. 40. On fo. LVIr Pole described his effort to get at the 'inner sense' through allegory. The word was like the body, its true meaning like the spirit.

continuing that any books, even divinely inspired ones, were subject to interpretation and therefore distortion, even deliberate invention, 'while those written in the blood of martyrs cannot be adulterated', a significantly physical term (fos. XCVv–XCVIr).

Combining both martyrology and its original, Christ's passion, Pole developed the metaphor of legation which he had earlier applied to priests as emissaries to God. Before offering this (perhaps) metaphorical solution to Henry's problems, Pole assured the king that he was not 'playing seriously' (fo. XCVIIv). Metaphors had at least two edges. Pole tried to guard against being cut by one of them by a pre-emptive strike on his reader. Of course, the emissaries were to be Fisher, More, and the monks, for all of whom Pole once more presented credentials in the form of capsule biographies, along with himself. Pole quickly got back to his argument against learned pretension and in favour of the ability of any 'simple Christian' to understand what he meant with the aid of revelation (fo. CIIv). This Erasmian-sounding theme occurs frequently. Pole provided the *idiota*, the unlearned common person, with a long oration to Henry, summed up simply as 'we do not listen to your words'. Pole's unlearned speaker concluded with his own major point: 'we will no more listen to words, but now we will look at things written by the finger of God, that is, the holy martyrs' (fo. CIIIr). As for Henry, all should pray that God would not only send him good counsellors, but that 'he might hear good counsellors'. Having suggested a wide range of possible resistances, Pole left ordinary Christians only prayer (fo. CVr).

This was not the only option for him. A prince and prophet could appeal to the bluntest strategy of resistance and call on Francis I and Charles V to attack England. Isaiah unmasked 'your [Henry's] counsels', but Pole claimed that no one really needed a prophet to see what the king was doing (fo. CIXr–v). Charles above all could hardly miss it, given Henry's private injury to Charles's aunt Katherine and the much more serious public one done to the church. Since Charles had just then scored a major victory over the church's external enemies in the battle of Tunis, he was fully prepared to deal with Henry (fo. CXv). If Charles had somehow missed Henry's devilry, Pole told him about it. A set oration followed, designed to shame Charles into dealing with the most serious 'danger to the republic' (fos. CXIr–CXIIIIr, continued on CXVIvf). Among the incentives he offered Charles, Pole included an English fifth column of 'whole legions, lurking [*latent*] in England' (fo. CXIIv). In addition to military attack, Pole proposed economic warfare. What would England do if its trade with the continent were cut off (fo. CXVIIr–v)?

Pole then turned his back on such plans and on both powers in favour of faith. One of Pole's most determined later antagonists, Bernardo Fresneda, thought

De unitate was about justification by faith, and he was right.[28] The only certain source of knowledge, faith was both the light and the fire 'through which light we believe and know [*cognovimus*] that Jesus is Christ'. 'The spirit . . . in that faith which is the gift of God . . . gives . . . firm and stable knowledge.' Pole defined faith as 'supernatural light' which gave form to unformed human belief (fo. CXXVIIr). 'True faith', as the marginal note had it, was 'the only way to be given entry to knowledge of the divine mysteries'. This meant, 'unless you believe, you will not understand'. Everything of any value in earthly bodies came from 'the image of faith' that Pole now called Henry to contemplate. The examples of Sennacherib and Sodom and Gomorrah showed what happens to people who trust in their own powers rather than faith (fos. CXXVIIv–CXXVIIIr). Pole offered a quasi-scholastic disquisition on the nature of faith as an 'accident in the mind of man' (fo. LXVIv).

This was not the sort of faith Pole had in mind. He meant faith that led to felicity 'and that kingdom with God which raises us an infinite distance above our nature'. Transcendence to the maximum degree became the final resistance. 'And here is that spirit, which in that faith which is the gift of God, gives *cognitio* and firm and stable knowledge above what can be thought by man' (fo. CXXVIIr). This was the faith with which Pole hoped to 'ravish' Henry, the faith which meant believing before understanding, as the prophet said (fo. CXXVIIv). Sounding a great deal like Erasmus, Pole offered this escape, as he had before, as appealing because 'it easily persuades the wise both to hold in contempt their wisdom and to be least offended to take themselves as fools' (fo. CXXVIIIv).[29] Pole had introduced the dyad *stultus/imprudens* when he first turned to Sampson's work (fo. IXv), and had called himself foolish almost immediately because of his hope for Henry's salvation (fo. IIv). Usually Pole appeared simply to reverse the valence on his opponents' use of these terms. What Sampson thought wisdom (*sapientia*) was really foolishness, and vice versa, a point which also allowed Pole once again to contrast seriousness and playfulness, smiles and tears (fo. Xr).[30] But his fondness for *serio ludere* immediately gives reason for pause. Pole's handling of wise/foolish is reminiscent of their treatment in Erasmus's *Moriae encomium*, including the final escape into *afflatus*.[31] Pole

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[28] *Doc. hist.*, 2, pp. 563–4. Walker (pp. 245–6) was the first to note the importance of justification by faith to *De unitate*.

[29] M. A. Screech, *Erasmus: ecstasy and the praise of folly* (London: Duckworth, 1980).

[30] The possibility that these binary oppositions are really disguised dialectics will be discussed in the next chapter.

[31] Screech, chs. 4–6.

certainly had a high opinion of Erasmus.[32] He defended him stoutly against Sampson's misreading, assuring Sampson that Erasmus was a good supporter of the pope. Pole praised his knowledge in letters, his productivity, and above all his edition of Jerome, than whom there was no worthier or holier ancient. The edition proved that Erasmus had recognized no church but Rome.

Probably this judgment is true, in something like the sense of church that Pole developed in *De unitate*.[33] Pole unquestionably saw no alternative to it. Basing himself on Paul's apostrophe of divine light's transforming powers, Pole inserted his faith within the church, outside of which there could be no light of Christ (fo. CXXIXr). The conclusion that Henry had no choice but to do penance and submit to ecclesiastical authority automatically followed Pole's belated introduction of the church's laws, combined with a short argument that the scriptures owed their authority to the church, by which he meant the patristic interpreters (fos. CXXXIv and XXXIr). Both points may have responded to the difficulty raised by Pole's demonstration of the power of unmediated faith. Faith yes, but only within the church. Yet this solution did not hold for very long. Pole quickly returned to the necessity and power of revelation, concluding his 'oration' with the hope expressed by Ezekiel that 'your iniquity will not be your ruin' (fos. CXXXIIv–CXXXVIr).

Pole's emphasis on faith and his formulation and perhaps potentially unstable resolution of the apparent dilemma which confronted those who shared his view at the same time as they were determined to stay within the Roman church immediately identifies him as already a member of the 'Italian (or latterly English) evangelicals' or *spirituali*.[34] Some key elements of the vocabulary of *De unitate* reinforce Pole's allegiance. One of the most important of these was *beneficium*, especially in its most famous form of the *Beneficio di Cristo*.[35] In *De unitate*, Pole frequently used the word, sometimes in a political sense that would have come naturally to him as a noble, more often and much more importantly

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[32] He owned copies of eight of Erasmus's works, including the New Testament. Bodleian Library, MS Broxbourne 84.11, unfoliated, printed in Alessandro Pastore, 'Due biblioteche umanistiche del Cinquecento (I libri del cardinal Pole e di Marcantonio Flaminio)', *Rinascimento*, ser. 2, 19 (1979), pp. 269–90, pp. 279–80.

[33] Brian Gogan, *The common corps of Christendom: ecclesiological themes in the writing of Sir Thomas More* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), p. 326.

[34] J. F. Davis, 'Lollardy and the reformation in England', *ARG*, 73 (1982), pp. 217–37, p. 232. Davis does not mention Pole.

[35] Carlo Ossola called *beneficio* the 'leitmotiv, a suggello e compendio dell'intero messaggio valdesiano'. Juan de Valdés, *Lo evangelio di san Matteo*, ed. Carlo Ossola (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985), p. 30.

with a meaning very close to the *Beneficio*'s of Christ's sacrifice, and at the grand finale, in a combination of the two.[36] In the narrow meaning, he criticized Henry's belief that the headship was a *beneficium* rather than an injury (fo. IIIIv) and sarcastically asked whether the king's attack on the nobility was his *beneficium*. Pole moved very close to the *Beneficio*'s understanding in a long passage on Simon bar Jonah's recognition of Christ. This he could do only through revelation, 'such that afterwards, liberated, and made blessed, he rather recognized his liberator's *beneficium*' (cf. fo. XLIXr). It had come 'not from works, nor from any other thing that should be subject to the senses, but rather he received this knowledge of God infused into his soul'. As a result, Simon took the name Peter to signify that he was a new man, not like 'his first parent' Adam (fos. XLVr–XLVv). Pole glossed 'Tu es Petrus', the verse of Matthew which provided the principal foundation of papal primacy, to mean 'You who by nature are a son of death, son of hell, completely surrounded by shadows; who drew nothing from your father Jonah except sin, shadows and death, now by this knowledge [*cognitione*] of the creator and liberator are made blessed, free from misery, from sin and death . . . .You, who by nature are miserable, are a slave, are the son of Jonah, bear the form of a [the?] son of God.'[37] As Pole concluded, this *beneficium patris* was eternal life (fo. XLVIv). It is of great importance that Pole depended on Pauline soteriology, including as a commentary on the primacy. This would not have left that much distance between Pole and Sampson, who had glossed the 'rock' as faith, not Peter and been severely castigated by Pole as a result (fo. LXVIv).[38]

Beneficium did not derive solely from Christ's action. The martyrs' deaths could also produce *beneficia* (fo. LXXXIIIIr), above all for England, but only through Christ. Pole offered an apostrophe to *Anglia* urging it to recognize 'the greatest benefit of Christ to you' in the martyrs. If England did this, it could have the honour of saving Germany by *Christi beneficio* (fo. CIIIIv). Most important, Pole's own action could contribute to the *beneficium* of saving Henry.

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[36] For the language of benefits in the political realm, see David Harris Sacks, 'The countervailing of benefits: monopoly, liberty, and benevolence in Tudor England' in Dale Hoak, ed., *Tudor political culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 272–91.

[37] 'Tu qui natura es filius mortis, filius gehennae, totus tenebris circunfusus; qui ex patre tuo Iona nihil hausisti praeter peccatum, tenebras, & mortem, iam hac cognitione creatoris & liberatoris tui factus es beatus, liber a miseria, liber a peccato & morte' (fo. XLVIv).

[38] Pole reinterpreted Nicholas of Lyra, Sampson's preferred exegete, to have written that the rock stood for 'faithful Peter' not Peter's faith.

In exchange for the many *beneficia* Henry had given Pole, Pole would return to him the *beneficium* of doing penance (or repenting; it is impossible to be sure of Pole's meaning), a gift that he had from Christ's hands. This was 'the privilege conceded to men by Christ's merit, through which we are called from death to life' (fo. CXXr–v). Pauline soteriology again, this time with political implications. Religion and politics were inseparable.

In full-blown 'spiritual' terminology, *beneficium* produced *consolatio* against fear and death, as it did for the humanists, and it did in *De unitate* as well.[39] Pole concluded a section on fos. XCIIIr–XCIIIIr about More's death with praise of 'the greatest power of divine consolation. Oh you, Christ, the sole consoler of souls' and 'leader and *exemplar* of our life'. If Christ, then Peter, whom Pole identified as peculiarly the consoler, like Christ, rather than assigning that duty to all Christians as he said Henry's proponents did (fo. LIXr). Leading up to his peroration, Pole noted that although he had promised *consolatio*, he had delivered only tears. Now he pointed to the 'pact' (*foedus*) that God offered any believer, implicitly calling it *consolatio* (fo. CIIr). Those who received *beneficium* became new men and 'sharers and participants [*consortes & participes*] of his glory' (fo. XIV). Henry, too, were he to be converted, would be 'His [Christ's] participant' and transformed into the image of Christ's face (fo. CXXIXr). All of this recurs in the *Beneficio*.

The source of this language, together with Pole's great emphasis on faith, has been disputed. Recently, a link has been posited between Juan de Valdés and Pole, through the means of a deliberate plan executed by Marcantonio Flaminio in 1541.[40] The centrality to *De unitate* of *beneficium*, *fides*, and the illuminationist soteriology behind them has gone unremarked. As a matter of chronology, it is perhaps not a coincidence that while writing *De unitate* Pole was studying with Jan van Kampen, the man who formulated the 'scientific' version of the *beneficium Christi* in his *Commentariolus . . . in duas divi Pauli epistolas, sed argumenti eiusdem, alteram ad Romanos, alteram ad Galatas* (Cracow: Matthias

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[39] For *consolatio* as a marker of Valdesian sympathies, see *Inq. rom.*, pp. 146–50 and for the humanists, George W. McClure, *Sorrow and consolation in Italian humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). It is almost as hard to be certain of the significance of the use of *consolatio* as of *beneficio*. At least later in the century, virtually anyone could use it in an insignificant sense to mean relief. See the numerous instances in the Carafa family correspondence in BAV, Barberini latini, e.g., 5709, fo. 92; 5710, fo. 18r–v, Cardinal Durante reporting that the appointment of his nephew as coadjutor of the see of Brescia consoled him; and 5711, in letters from Scipione Rebiba to Cardinal Carafa, often over something quite trivial, e.g., fo. 63r a letter.

[40] *Alumbrados*, pp. 135–6.